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At the onset of research, this paper set out to explore the causes and consequences of Haiti as a failed state and then discuss initiatives and opportunities for further SOUTHCOM engagement. Upon concluding research, it appears that what Haiti requires is beyond the capacity of a U.S. geographic combatant command. This paper contends that although SOUTHCOM efforts toward Haiti's short and long term recovery have made a positive impact, it is time to hand off some of the responsibilities to regional partners and the United Nations. Current initiatives such as Tradewinds, Fuerzas Comando, and Continuing Promise have been effective, but when considering the scope and scale of what Haiti requires, SOUTHCOM efforts are merely scratching the surface. By relinquishing some of their responsibilities in Haiti, SOUTHCOM can focus their efforts toward a state, or states, that haven't already failed. Haiti is a failed state and if it weren't for the influx of billions of dollars in foreign aid, Haiti would most likely be closer to the top of the Failed States Index than her current position at number 11. SOUTHCOM should continue to provide assistance to Haiti in the event of natural disasters, but any other discretionary resources should be directed toward the "northern triangle" of Central America; Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Known as the "cocaine corridor" to the United States via Mexico, these states are an increasing concern for U.S. national security and therefore deserve SOUTHCOM's full attention.					
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**Haiti's Downward Spiral:  
Causes, Consequences and the Way Ahead**

**by**

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**LCDR, USCG**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**04 May 2011**

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## **Abstract**

At the onset of research, this paper set out to explore the causes and consequences of Haiti as a failed state and then discuss initiatives and opportunities for further SOUTHCOM engagement. Upon concluding research, it appears that what Haiti requires is beyond the capacity of a U.S. geographic combatant command. This paper contends that although SOUTHCOM efforts toward Haiti's short and long term recovery have made a positive impact, it is time to hand off some of the responsibilities to regional partners and the United Nations. Current initiatives such as Tradewinds, Fuerzas Comando, and Continuing Promise have been effective, but when considering the scope and scale of what Haiti requires, SOUTHCOM efforts are merely scratching the surface. By relinquishing some of their responsibilities in Haiti, SOUTHCOM can focus their efforts toward a state, or states, that haven't already failed. Haiti is a failed state and if it weren't for the recent influx of billions of dollars in foreign aid, Haiti would most likely be closer to the top of the Failed States Index than her current position at number 11. SOUTHCOM should continue to provide assistance to Haiti in the event of natural disasters, but any other discretionary resources should be directed toward the "northern triangle" of Central America; Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Known as the "cocaine corridor" to the United States via Mexico, these states are an increasing concern for U.S. national security and therefore deserve SOUTHCOM's full attention.

## **Introduction**

As the poorest and most unstable state in U.S. Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) area of responsibility, Haiti's continued demise is a critical concern for three reasons. The first is that unstable states are a haven for transnational crime and Haiti is no exception. The second is the recurring large scale response to natural disasters and the humanitarian crisis that inevitably follows. Lastly, mass migration has been a persistent threat since the early 1990's and will remain a critical concern until Haiti's government and economy show signs of stabilizing. Although improving Haiti's situation will require international assistance and a "whole of government" approach, there are specific issues on which SOUTHCOM can and should take the lead. In order to reverse Haiti's downward spiral, SOUTHCOM should increase the scope and scale of pre-existing initiatives aimed at improving Haiti's law enforcement capabilities, infrastructure, and basic medical services.

Haiti's demise can be traced back to its roots as a European colony that sought and gained independence in 1804 by abolishing slavery and becoming the world's first state to be led by African descendants.<sup>1</sup> Although gaining independence is normally considered a positive step, for Haiti it could be argued it began their downward spiral. Prior to independence, Haiti's economy was flourishing as a result of their robust sugar and coffee exports. However, shortly after gaining independence, France penalized Haiti with an indemnity of 150 million Francs in order to make up lost revenues from slave labor.<sup>2</sup> In addition, periodic embargoes on Haiti's exports by the U.S. and other western powers had a

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<sup>1</sup> British Broadcasting Company, "Country Profile: Haiti," 2011 Feb 03, <http://bbc.co.uk> (accessed 27 March 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Alex Von Tunzelman, "Haiti: The Land Where Children Eat Mud," 17 May 2009, [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/article6281614.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article6281614.ece) (accessed 13 February 2011).

crippling effect on the economy.<sup>3</sup> To date, Haiti has yet to recover. Although there have been brief periods of stability, ineffective government coupled with natural disasters have left the former “jewel of the Caribbean” in a state of perpetual decline. Haiti now ranks near the top of the Fund for Peace Failed State Index.<sup>4</sup>

This research paper examines the categories and indicators that support the definition of a failed state and then applies them to Haiti. In order to accurately define Haiti’s current situation, this paper will reference the 2010 Failed State Index prepared annually by Foreign Policy and The Fund for Peace, and Jane’s Country Stability Ratings. Next, the consequences of inaction will be discussed. In this section, challenges such as trans-national crime, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and mass migration will be discussed as they currently exist, as well as their potential to increase in scope. Finally, this paper will discuss how U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is responding to these challenges and recommend opportunities for targeted engagement within pre-existing initiatives. As with any situation that postulates recommended courses of action, there will be disagreements. Regardless of Haiti’s current situation, there is a valid argument that suggests any further investment or involvement from foreign states is simply prolonging the misery. Prior to the conclusion, this paper lists selected counter arguments and appropriate rebuttals.

### **Haiti is a Failed State**

As discussed earlier, Haiti has experienced a pattern of decline since gaining its independence. Currently, Haiti ranks 11<sup>th</sup> out of 177 states in the Failed States Index (FSI).<sup>5</sup> This document ranks states in three separate categories, Social, Economic, and Political.

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<sup>3</sup> Ellison Elliott, “A Note on the Economic History of Haiti,” *Foreign Policy Blogs Network*, 28 January 2010 <http://globeconomy.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2010/01/28/a-historical-economic-note-on-haiti/> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>4</sup> The Fund for Peace, “2010 Failed State Index,” <http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

These categories are then further divided, each containing several indicators. The twelve indicators assign a numerical value between 1 and 10 and cumulatively they represent a country's score. Haiti's numerical score is 101.6. For sake of comparison, Somalia, which tops the list, has a score of 114.3 and Norway, which ranks 177, has a numerical score of 18.3.<sup>6</sup>

In the Social category of the FSI, Haiti's score reveals a marginal increase over the last four years. Although all of the scores in the Social category warrant attention, the Demographic Pressures indicator is of paramount concern. This indicator considers population densities relative to food supply, age relative to population, and settlement patterns in proximity to environmental hazards; at 9.3, Haiti's score is the fifth worst in the world.<sup>7</sup>

In the Economic category of the FSI, indicators also reveal a worsening situation. Haiti's economy was scored at 8.3 in 2008 and rose .06 as a result of a direct hit by three hurricanes. The score increased again in 2010, but only by .03. The marginal increase may not account for the current economic situation or it may reflect that the economy is in such bad shape to begin with, that a significant worsening isn't possible. Either way, the economic prospects are so dire that Haiti recently qualified for debt relief from the International Monetary Fund. Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries program, Haiti was the benefactor of approximately \$1.3 billion in debt relief and the World Bank also provided \$900 million in relief, virtually eliminating Haiti's international debt.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> International Monetary Fund, "IMF Chief Calls for Marshall Plan for Shattered Haiti," 20 January 2010, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2010/new012010a.htm> (accessed 28 March 2011).

Unfortunately, the January 2010 earthquake set Haiti even further back and they have since accumulated approximately \$400 million in debt.<sup>9</sup>

The Political/Military category is where Haiti's plight is most clearly illustrated. Of the six indicators, no score is below 8.2 and three scores are above 9. Considerations within the Political/Military category include legitimacy of state, ability to provide public services, human rights violations, legitimacy of security forces, and external political actors.<sup>10</sup> With an External Intervention indicator score of 9.6, Haiti's situation is only slightly worse than Afghanistan, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. To date, only 3 states worldwide have a higher External Intervention score than Haiti. Haiti also fares poorly in the indicators of Legitimacy of State (9.3) and Deterioration of Public Services (9.0).

Supporting the findings of the Failed States Index is a document released by Jane's titled Country Stability Ratings. This document is slightly different in that it ranks states by region instead of the entire world. Of 30 states in the Latin America region, Haiti ranked last with a score of 31 out of 100.<sup>11</sup> By comparison, the next closest state was Guatemala which scored 24 points better at 55. Jane's Country Stability Ratings is more comprehensive than the FSI and is broken down by five categories and then further divided by 24 individual indicators. Regardless, both documents are still largely focused on the social, economic, and political factors. Comparing the two, the FSI is more critical of Haiti's military situation and Jane's is more critical of Haiti's social and economic situation. Either way, they both illustrate that Haiti's current situation is deplorable.

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<sup>9</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook, Haiti," 10 March 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html> (accessed 28 March 2011).

<sup>10</sup> The Fund for Peace, "2010 Failed State Index," <http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>11</sup> IHS Jane's, "Country Stability Ratings," 2010, [http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/caca041.htm@current&Prod\\_Name=CACS&Prod\\_Name=CACS&QueryText=REGIONAL+STATISTICS#toclink-j1931227100427921](http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/caca041.htm@current&Prod_Name=CACS&Prod_Name=CACS&QueryText=REGIONAL+STATISTICS#toclink-j1931227100427921) (accessed 28 March 2011).



The common thread amongst both documents is Haiti's failure to maintain a legitimate government able to provide basic public services for its citizens, and Haiti's reliance on external intervention. None of this is a new development. Since gaining their independence from France, Haiti has experienced a number of government coups and to date has only experienced a peaceful transfer of power twice, one of which occurred as this paper was being written.<sup>12</sup> Haiti's failure to provide basic services for its citizens has resulted in the manifestation of three challenges that threaten to hold the entire state hostage: transnational crime, the overwhelming crises that accompany natural disasters, and mass migration.

### **Why Haiti is Failing**

As a result of decades of ineffective government, Haiti has become a haven for transnational crime and routinely needs assistance for natural disasters and the accompanying humanitarian crises. SOUTHCOM's most recent Posture Statement and the Command Strategy for 2020 devotes considerable attention toward Haiti's current situation. SOUTHCOM's Command Strategy is comprised of three strategic objectives which are supported by three focus areas.<sup>13</sup> Haiti's current challenges are nested within all three strategic objectives and two of the three focus areas.

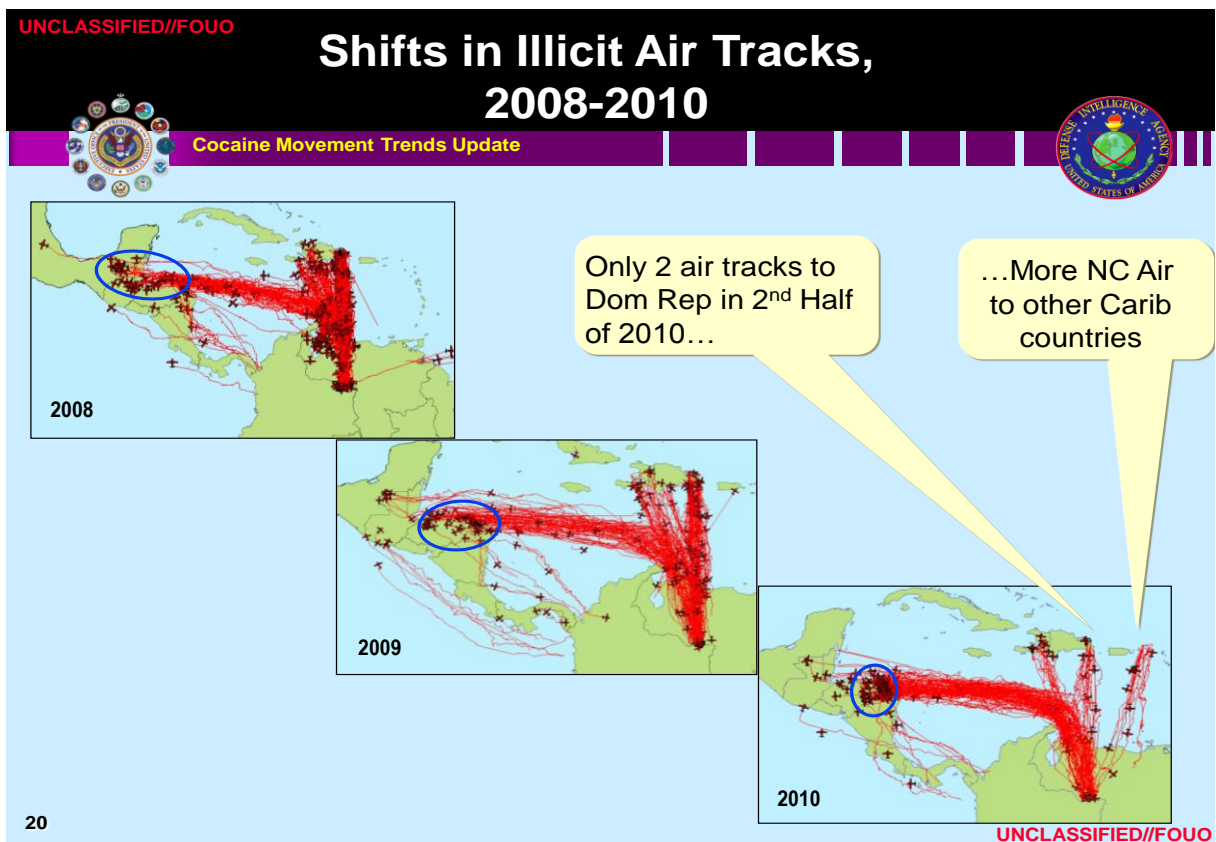
Transnational crime is a persistent threat to regional security and it transcends all three of SOUTHCOM's strategic objectives. In Haiti, the most prominent and formidable types of transnational crime are drug trafficking and human smuggling. With Haiti's

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<sup>12</sup> IHS Jane's, "Sentinel Country Risk Assessment: Haiti," 17 March 2010, [http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?Sent\\_Country=Haiti&Prod\\_Name=CACS&K2\\_DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1](http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?Sent_Country=Haiti&Prod_Name=CACS&K2_DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1) (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>13</sup> United States Southern Command, "Homepage," <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/index.php> (accessed 13 February 2011). Per the 2020 Command Strategy, SOUTHCOM's three strategic objectives are (1) Defend the United States, (2) Foster Regional Security, and (3) Be an Enduring Partner. SOUTHCOM's three focus areas are (1) Counter Illicit Trafficking, (2) Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief, and (3) Peacekeeping Operations; Haiti situation is embedded in focus area One and Two.

National Police (PNH) suffering from years of insufficient funding, inadequate training, and allegations of corruption, the armed gangs associated with drug transshipments have been operating with impunity and the lure of easy money has permeated all levels of government. According to the CIA, Colombian drug traffickers prefer Haiti as a transshipment point for moving cocaine to the U.S., Canada, and Europe because of ineffective policing and pervasive corruption.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, analysis of graphical data compiled by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) reveals that Haiti is experiencing a downturn in Colombian transshipments.



However, according to an agent with the FBI Counternarcotics Task Force, the trend does not coincide with improved policing. In an interview with Special Agent Eatman of the FBI, he

<sup>14</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "World Factbook: Haiti," 16 March 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html> (accessed 28 March 2011).

indicated that the downturn is actually a result of the 2010 earthquake. After this event, access to airports and seaports, as well as overland routes, was degraded so badly that the ability to move drugs in and through Haiti was significantly restricted.<sup>15</sup> Special Agent Eatman went on to say that law enforcement agencies fully expected transshipment activity to increase to previous epidemic levels once the aforementioned damage to infrastructure is repaired.<sup>16</sup> Special Agent Eatman confirmed the CIA's findings regarding Colombian drug operations in Haiti and added that Jamaican and Mexican gangs also operate from Haiti.<sup>17</sup>

Human smuggling and kidnapping are also a serious problem in Haiti. The current situation is so bad that the Department of State (DOS) has listed Haiti as a special case in the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIPR) for the fifth consecutive year.<sup>18</sup> For sake of comparison, Somalia is the only other state in the world that is rated as a special case.<sup>19</sup> Kidnapping and subsequent trafficking in Haiti have proven to be indiscriminate as children and adults are routinely victimized. Not to minimize the impact of trafficking adults, the trafficking of children from Haiti is at epidemic levels. According to DOS, the majority of trafficking cases involve children that are sent to live with another family and then subsequently subject to indentured servitude and sexual exploitation.<sup>20</sup> The 2010 TIPR estimates that 65% of these children, also referred to as "restaveks," are girls aged between 6 and 14 and they receive no payment for working long hours and are routinely subject to physical and sexual abuse.<sup>21</sup> Although the Haitian government is aware of this problem,

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<sup>15</sup> David Eatman, telephone call with author, 6 April 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report," June 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm> (accessed 28 March 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

there is no statutory law in place that prohibits trafficking in persons. With that in mind, Haiti will most likely retain their special case rating on future trafficking reports.

Although Haitian adults are also kidnapped and smuggled to be exploited for labor, an equally troubling aspect is the kidnapping of foreigners and aid workers. The current DOS Travel Warning for Haiti strongly urges U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Haiti, noting that 12 Americans were kidnapped in 2010.<sup>22</sup> Especially troubling is the kidnapping of two female aid workers shortly after the 2010 earthquake. Although unharmed and released six days later, the kidnapping of aid workers in a country that is almost entirely reliant on foreign aid sends a very negative message to those who are willing to help. Aside from the negative impact on Haiti's general population, the kidnapping of foreigners represents a significant deterrent to foreign direct investment (FDI). In "When States Fail: Causes and Consequences," Robert Rotberg argues that FDI is crucial to reviving economies and goes on to state that the main impediment to FDI is instability as a result of crime.<sup>23</sup> Rotberg's assertion supports research conducted several years prior regarding Haiti's investment climate. At a conference addressing FDI in the Caribbean and Latin America, Martha Kelley described the FDI climate in Haiti as inhospitable and cited insecurity as a result of criminal activity as a cause.<sup>24</sup>

Further complicating the PNH's ability to combat the transnational crime challenge, approximately four thousand inmates escaped from the national prison shortly after the 2010

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Travel Warning: Haiti," 9 December 2010, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_4632.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_4632.html) (accessed 28 March 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, "When States Fail: Causes and Consequences," 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Martha Kelley, "Assessing the Investment Climate in Haiti: Policy Changes," 6 April 2001, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/42/1897610.pdf> (accessed 28 March 2011).

earthquake.<sup>25</sup> Without question, a percentage of these inmates are recidivists and have reconnected with Haiti's armed gangs. Another challenge that has complicated the security situation is the disestablishment of the Haitian military under President Aristide. Regardless of his motive, the unintended consequence is that when the military stood down, a large percentage of their weapons went unaccounted for and those weapons are now in the hands of criminal gangs.<sup>26</sup>

Although recently besieged by natural disasters, Haiti's failed security situation is not a result of hurricanes or earthquakes. The PNH's inability to provide basic security for the population is largely self-induced and for improvement to take hold, it must come from the Haitian people. This assertion is supported in a recent United Nations article, in which the Secretary-General stated "Haitians must embrace the rule of law to advance peace and prosperity."<sup>27</sup>

Although far from being considered stable, Haiti's situation was showing signs of promise after the 2006 election of President Rene Preval. Unfortunately, Haiti was hit by three hurricanes and a tropical storm in 2008 and conditions have continued to deteriorate since then. Haiti's inability to respond to natural disasters is well documented and has resulted in a near constant presence of the United Nations and various humanitarian assistance groups. Years of deforestation have left Haiti vulnerable to mudslides and the storms of 2004 and 2008 killed thousands of people and destroyed buildings, houses, roads and other critical infrastructure. The storms mentioned above pale in comparison to the devastation brought on by the January 2010 earthquake. As a result of the earthquake's

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<sup>25</sup> IHS Jane's, "Country Risk Assessment: Haiti," 17 March 2010, [http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?Sent\\_Country=Haiti&Prod\\_Name=CACS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1](http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?Sent_Country=Haiti&Prod_Name=CACS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1) (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, "Haiti Will Continue to Need Strong International Support," 6 April 2011, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38027&Cr=haiti&Cr1> (accessed 6 April 2011).

epicenter being located near Port-au-Prince, over 300,000 were killed and over one million people have been left homeless.<sup>28</sup>

Years of government corruption and a general feeling of hopelessness have resulted in a steady stream of Haitian migrants headed toward neighboring islands or the United States. On two particular occasions, the mass migration of Haitians has caused a crisis for the United States. In 1992, the U.S. Coast Guard interdicted over 37,600 Haitian migrants and just two years later, they interdicted over 25,000 Haitian migrants.<sup>29</sup> Aside from these two events, the Coast Guard has interdicted over 53,000 Haitian migrants since 1982.<sup>30</sup> What isn't reflected in the above statistics are the numbers of illegal migrants who actually completed their voyage. Illegal migrants are not only a security concern, but a health concern as well. Haiti has the highest rate of AIDS infection outside of Africa and there is very real possibility that infected migrants have made their way to America.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the threat of mass migration has resulted in the Coast Guard and other immigration agencies maintaining a near constant presence in the Windward Pass. This diverts their attention from potential search and rescue cases or regional threats such as counternarcotics operations.

### **Reversing the Trend**

Recognizing that transnational crime, the failure to respond to natural disasters and

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<sup>28</sup> Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Haiti Raises Quake Death Toll on Anniversary," 12 January 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/01/12/haiti-anniversary-memorials.html> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>29</sup> United States Coast Guard, "Alien Migrant Interdiction Statistics," 5 April 2011, <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg531/AMIO/FlowStats/FY.asp> (accessed 6 April 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> IHS Jane's, "Country Risk Assessment: Haiti," 17 March 2010, [http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?Sent\\_Country=Haiti&Prod\\_Name=CACS&K2\\_DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1](http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?Sent_Country=Haiti&Prod_Name=CACS&K2_DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1) (accessed 13 February 2011).

mass migration are perpetuating not only Haiti's current dilemma, but also overall regional stability, SOUTHCOM coordinates several exercises each year aimed at improving conditions throughout the Caribbean.

SOUTHCOM has several initiatives directly and indirectly targeted at improving the situation in Haiti. Some of these initiatives, such as Tradewinds and Fuerzas Comando are ongoing while new initiatives such as New Horizons and Continued Promise have come on line as a result of the 2010 earthquake. Collectively, these initiatives are aimed at improving security, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life in Haiti. Although the focus of each is somewhat different, none of these programs are mutually exclusive as improved security will indirectly promote foreign direct investment which will undoubtedly improve infrastructure and generate hope among the people as new jobs and opportunities are created. Although these programs are sponsored and led by SOUTHCOM, they purposely include regional partners in order to foster a spirit of cooperation and ownership among neighboring states with the implied notion that they are more stable and prosperous together than they are individually. This is certainly the case with Haiti, as the impact of her continued demise does not rest entirely within her borders. SOUTHCOM's effort at coordinating and executing these programs is commendable and the humanitarian and infrastructure programs are crucial to Haiti's survival.

Operations such as New Horizons, Beyond the Horizon, and Continuing Promise are humanitarian in nature and there is no question that these efforts should continue. These missions typically serve the entire region; but their recent focus has been an extension of efforts from Operation Unified Response which SOUTHCOM launched immediately following the 2010 earthquake. The principle difference between these three operations is their duration. Beyond the Horizon is a three-year multi-phase exercise while Continuing

Promise and New Horizons are one-year single phase events.<sup>32</sup> All three missions provide varying levels of medical assistance while embarked civil engineering units assist with construction of schools, clinics, community centers, and water wells.<sup>33</sup> Although all of these projects are important, the improvement of water wells took on increased urgency after Haiti experienced a cholera outbreak in October 2010 that infected over 250,000 people, killing more than 4,500.<sup>34</sup> As a result of repeated natural disasters, less than half of Haiti's population has access to clean water and over 80 percent of the population does not have access to sufficient sanitation.<sup>35</sup> Because cholera is a transmittable disease, it is vitally important that construction efforts aimed at safe water and sanitation facilities be continued. Continuing Promise, which is primarily aimed at improving the medical and health services situation in Haiti embraced the "whole of government" approach by including 13 non-government organizations and military personnel from Canada, South America, and Europe.<sup>36</sup>

Fuerzas Comando is an ongoing multi-national exercise aimed at improving regional security. The 2010 exercise was comprised of 19 states and included a competition that was focused on non-traditional military actions such as combating transnational crime. According to the SOUTHCOM website, transnational threats such as kidnapping, terrorism, and drug trafficking cannot be defeated solely through traditional military methods and

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<sup>32</sup> United States Southern Command, "Our Mission: Humanitarian Assistance," 25 January 2011, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/ourMission.php> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Alex Kingsbury, "Cholera in Haiti Far Worse Than Predicted," 21 March 2011, [http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2011/03/21/cholera-in-haiti-far-worse-than-predicted\\_print.html](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2011/03/21/cholera-in-haiti-far-worse-than-predicted_print.html) (accessed 28 March 2011).

<sup>35</sup> IHS Jane's, "Sentinel Country Risk Assessment: Haiti," 17 March 2010, [http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?Sent\\_Country=Haiti&Prod\\_Name=CACS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1](http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?Sent_Country=Haiti&Prod_Name=CACS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1) (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>36</sup> United States Southern Command, "Continuing Promise 2011," 18 March 2011, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/factFiles.php?id=165> (accessed 28 March 2011).



require coordination and cooperation among regional states.<sup>37</sup> The aforementioned threats easily link to the current situation in Haiti. Although terrorism is not one of Haiti's problems, narco-trafficking and kidnapping are major obstacles to Haiti's current and future security. Historically, kidnapping has been an especially troubling challenge in Haiti. During the first half of 2008, Haiti experienced one kidnapping per day and the perpetrators were indiscriminate, taking children, foreigners, and government officials.<sup>38</sup>

Fuerzas Comando presents several opportunities that can have a more direct impact on Haiti's security situation. To start with, Haiti's security forces should to be included in this exercise. The 2010 exercise was held in the Dominican Republic, but excluded Haiti. Whether or not Haiti was excluded because their security forces are inadequate is unknown. But it makes sense to include Haiti, especially if the training is being conducted in their neighboring state. The other opportunity that Fuerzas Comando presents for Haiti, as well as SOUTHCOM, is regional ownership. This can be accomplished by encouraging the top performers to take on the responsibility of providing training to Haitian forces. Every state that participates in Fuerzas Comando is a recipient of U.S aid, so there is no reason that U.S. aid to the top performing states cannot be leveraged. This proposal will undoubtedly require negotiation at the diplomatic level; but as stated above, fixing Haiti requires a whole of government approach. Since SOUTHCOM typically coordinates and pays for the majority of this exercise, it is not unreasonable to suggest that they provide an incentive package for the top performers during the next exercise. Obviously, the prime mover in this idea would be tangible incentives such as funding and equipment. The intangible incentive would be the

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<sup>37</sup> United States Southern Command, "Fuerzas Comando," 25 June 2010, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/factFiles.php?id=153> (accessed 18 March 2011).

<sup>38</sup> IHS Jane's, "Sentinel Country Risk Assessment: Haiti," 17 March 2010, [http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?Sent\\_Country=Haiti&Prod\\_Name=CACS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1](http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?Sent_Country=Haiti&Prod_Name=CACS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/haits010.htm@current#section1) (accessed 13 February 2011).

national prestige that a neighboring state would enjoy by taking the lead role in future exercises and the knowledge that they have contributed to the improvement of Haiti's situation.

Aside from including Haiti in future Fuerzas Comando exercises, there may be opportunities within the planning of the exercise to divert resources where they are needed most. Nine of the 19 states that participate and benefit from this exercise are relatively stable and four of those nine have country stability ratings in the 80's and 90's.<sup>39</sup> Not to suggest that these states be permanently excluded, but Haiti's situation is unquestionably the worst in the region and it stands to argue that the resources should be utilized in the most beneficial way.

Tradewinds is also a regional security exercise and has been taking place in the Caribbean for over 25 years. 15 states participated in the 2010 exercise, targeted toward improving capabilities in maritime interdiction and search and response with a focus on command and control. Haiti's Coast Guard, which is known for being the state's best trained and most stable security force, is a participant in this exercise and their continued inclusion is paramount to the state's future security and stability.

Tradewinds, like Fuerzas Comando, also has the potential for increased focus toward Haiti. Since half the exercise is aimed at maritime interdiction, future planning efforts should include an opportunity for neighboring states to conduct a joint patrol as a follow on to the exercise. Although some of these states do not possess vessels large enough to travel long distances, there is potential for personnel that participated in the exercise to augment Haitian Coast Guard forces. This idea will undoubtedly require a diplomatic effort from

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<sup>39</sup> IHS Jane's, "Country Stability Ratings," 2010, [http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/caca041.htm@current&Prod\\_Name=CACS&Prod\\_Name=CACS&QueryText=REGIONAL+STATISTICS#toclink-j1931227100427921](http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/CACS_doc_view.jsp?&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/caca041.htm@current&Prod_Name=CACS&Prod_Name=CACS&QueryText=REGIONAL+STATISTICS#toclink-j1931227100427921) (accessed 28 March 2011).

SOUTHCOM and cooperation among neighboring states. However, it is certainly worth exploring as Haiti's continued instability only serves to negatively impact neighboring states. Lastly, future exercises should incorporate marine engineering into the curriculum. Maritime interdiction operations require vessels in good working order and there is no sense in conducting these exercises if there are no means available for actual prosecution.

### **Counterargument**

As with most recommended proposals, there will be counterarguments and any project directed at improving Haiti's situation is certainly worthy of debate. One could easily argue that Haiti is a lost cause. In "Fixing Failed States," Ashraf Ghani and Claire Lockhart argue that Haiti's consistent inability to manage their affairs and provide basic services has created distrust between the citizens and the state and has essentially delegitimized the government.<sup>40</sup> In a paper titled "Why Foreign Aid to Haiti Failed," the U.S. National Academy of Public Administration furthers the argument by asserting "after consuming billions in foreign aid over three decades and hundreds of millions specifically for governance and democratization programs, not to mention billions for other programs, Haiti remains politically dysfunctional and impoverished."<sup>41</sup> Haiti's failure is not a result of the developed world ignoring their plight, but more a result of decades of government self indulgence and inability to peacefully negotiate state affairs. Quite simply, all efforts directed at assisting Haiti have failed and perhaps the only solution for Haiti will have to come from within. The last part of that argument was echoed by President Obama when, on the first anniversary of the 2010 earthquake, he stated that in order to successfully rebuild,

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<sup>40</sup> Ashraf Ghani and Claire Lockhart, "Fixing Failed States," 2008 Oxford University Press, NY.

<sup>41</sup> Terry F. Buss and Adam Gardner, "Why Foreign Aid to Haiti Failed," *National Academy of Public Administration*, February 2006, <http://www.napawash.org/publications-reports/why-foreign-aid-to-haiti-failed/>, (accessed 13 February 2011).

“Haiti can and must lead the way, with a strong vision for its future.”<sup>42</sup> Maybe it’s time for the rest of the world to allow Haiti to fix her own problems.

### **Rebuttal**

Allowing Haitians to take charge of their own future is a noble idea in concept. In reality however, Haiti is at a minimum, several years, if not a decade, away from reestablishing control over state affairs and rule of law. Whether it is natural disasters or transnational crime, there is decade’s worth of examples proving that Haiti’s instability is a persistent and valid concern for the Caribbean region and now is not the time to abandon assistance programs.

To suggest that the international community abandon current assistance to Haiti is short sighted for several reasons. The first is that Haiti’s crisis is not limited to state borders. Initiatives sponsored by SOUTHCOM, and supported by international partners, are improving Haiti’s organic capability to combat crime while simultaneously strengthening the government’s legitimacy. Haiti stands no chance of recovering until the security situation is improved and without external assistance, the PNH will continue to struggle. The cascading effect of improved security will provide the Haitian government with an opportunity to attract outside investment which will support the associated costs of improving infrastructure and providing basic services. Furthermore, an influx of FDI will create markets and jobs, restoring hope among the Haitian people. Lastly, all facets of improving Haiti’s health care situation are entirely dependent on outside assistance. Directly related to improving health care is infrastructure and until Haitian’s have access to clean water and reliable sanitation facilities, they will continue to be increasingly susceptible to terminal and communicable

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<sup>42</sup> President Barack Obama, “President Obama on Haiti: One Year Later,” 11 January 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/01/11/president-obama-haiti-one-year-later.html> (accessed 28 March 2011).

diseases. Infectious humans coupled with a propensity for mass migration is a serious concern for the entire region. Although it may seem cost-effective and convenient to allow Haitian's to solve their problems, the long term situation will only worsen if the international community ceases to provide assistance.

### **Recommendation**

Upon concluding research, it appears that SOUTHCOM's limited resources would be better utilized if applied to a state, or states, that have not already failed. As stated above, the solution to Haiti's dilemma requires a whole of government approach on a global scale. SOUTHCOM initiatives aimed at humanitarian assistance and improving security have benefited Haiti, and SOUTHCOM response to natural disasters should continue. However, future exercises and assistance aimed at improving Haiti's security should be coordinated and led by U.N Security and Assistance teams. SOUTHCOM's efforts will garner more results when directed toward a state that doesn't require an effort on the scale of The Marshall Plan in order to improve its overall situation.<sup>43</sup> In short, improving Haiti requires more than SOUTHCOM has to offer and in a fiscally constrained environment, it is time to focus elsewhere. In a recent brief to Pentagon officials, SOUTHCOM's Commander, General Fraser, expressed grave concern over the increasing instability and violence in Central America.<sup>44</sup> General Fraser went on to claim that the "northern triangle formed by Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras is possibly the most violent place on Earth" as a result of drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations.<sup>45</sup> A review of statistical data from Jane's, Central Intelligence Agency, and the FBI lends strong support to General

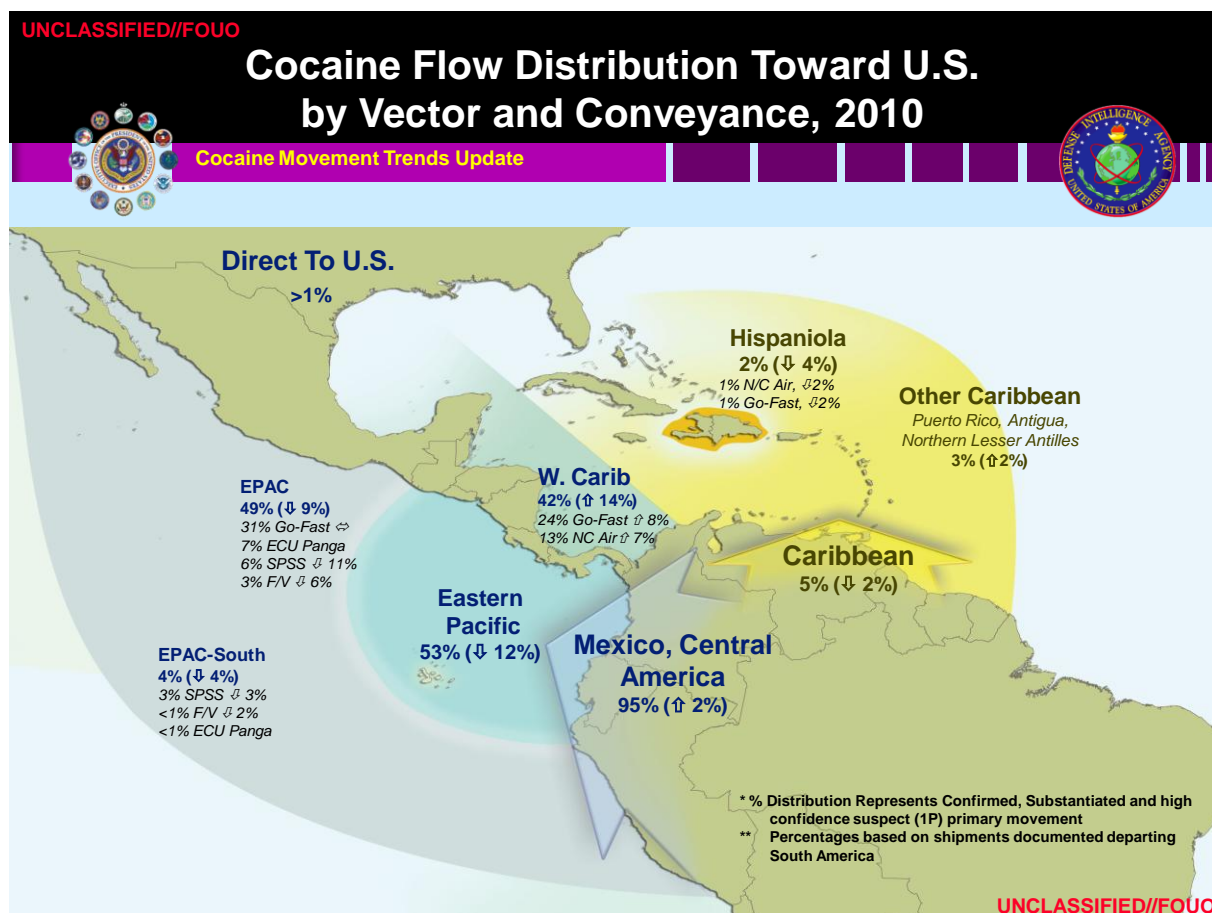
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<sup>43</sup> International Monetary Fund, "IMF Chief Calls for Marshall Plan for Shattered Haiti," 20 January 2010, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2010/new012010a.htm> (accessed 28 March 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Jim Garamone, "Central America Remains a Hotspot of Instability," *American Forces Press Service*, 31 March 2011, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/news.php?storyId=2604> (accessed 2 April 2011).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Fraser's claim. In an interview with FBI Special Agent Gabriel Krug, he indicated that Guatemala comes in just behind Colombia as a priority for counternarcotics operations.<sup>46</sup> Supporting his assertion is a recent study conducted by the FBI Counternarcotics Task Force which shows a marked increase in drug trafficking routes between Colombia and Mexico, via the northern triangle mentioned above.



In discussions regarding Central America, Special Agent Krug also noted that although Guatemala was the primary concern, there is a notable increase in narco-trafficking and associated violent crime in Honduras and El Salvador and the threat for further escalation is a valid concern.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Gabriel Krug, telephone call with author, 6 April 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

With that in mind, and noting that the violence resulting from the Mexican drug problem is spilling over into America, it may be a more judicious use of resources for SOUTHCOM to divert their security training focus away from Haiti and concentrate on Central America. Aside from the argument that billions of dollars have been spent on Haiti and have produced little if anything, there are other compelling arguments that support a shift toward Central America. Per the 2010 Failed States Index, the northern triangle states are far more stable than Haiti, ranking 75, 90, and 91. Although not thriving by any standard, their economies are in far better shape than Haiti's with all three states engaged in agricultural exports and Guatemala having the ability to produce and export oil and natural gas.<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As noted in the recommendation, the initial intent of this paper was to discuss Haiti as a failed state and propose recommendations for increased SOUTHCOM engagement. Analysis of the current situation reveals that SOUTHCOM has made positive contributions toward improving Haiti's dilemma. However, Haiti requires more than SOUTHCOM can provide.

In her current condition, Haiti is a failed state and her decline can be traced back to 1804. Years of corrupt government, environmental irresponsibility, and natural disasters have left Haiti in a virtual state of ruin. As a failed state in SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility, Haiti has been the benefactor of numerous SOUTHCOM initiatives such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and improvement to security and infrastructure. Unfortunately, Haiti has not capitalized on these opportunities and continues to behave irresponsibly by allowing corruption to infect all levels of government. The result is an

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<sup>48</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "World Factbook: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras," April 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/es.html> (accessed 6 April 2011).

ineffective government that is unable to provide basic services to the people whom now are at the mercy of criminal gangs and natural disasters.

Improving Haiti's situation is not impossible, but will require more responsible behavior on the part of its government and citizens and the current involvement of various international assistance groups will undoubtedly need to continue for years to come. SOUTHCAM has been effective in assisting Haiti with humanitarian and disaster relief issues. However, a long term solution to Haiti's dilemma will require more than SOUTHCAM is capable of providing. Although disaster response and medical assistance should not be abandoned, SOUTHCAM's security training programs will have a greater impact if focused toward Central America.

With narco-trafficking and violent crime reaching epidemic levels in Central America, SOUTHCAM should divert their regional security focus toward states that do not require intervention and assistance at every level of government. Although currently besieged by criminal activity, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras are relatively stable compared to Haiti and they have the economy, infrastructure, and resources to sustain themselves. By providing training assistance aimed at improving the capability and cooperation of regional security forces in Central America, SOUTHCAM will have a positive impact on not only the government, but the people as well. Furthermore, SOUTHCAM will be expending their limited resources in a way that stands the best chance of producing long term results.



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